steps being taken include maximising the generation from existing capacity, reduction in T&D losses, effective load management and energy conservation measures and arranging assistance from neighbouring States/Systems etc.

Exemption of Power Plants From Minimum Return Criteria of 3%

4384. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to exempt from the minimum return criteria of 3% laid down by Power Finance Corporation for renovation and modernisation of power plants for extending finances;

(b) whether P.F.C. has made available amount between Rs. 3,000/- crores for renovation and modernisation of power plants in order to increase the plant load factor and longevity of the plants;

(c) whether it is a fact that some foreign companies are being contacted or negotiated to participate by bringing latest technology and management practices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof, and by when the procjet is likely to be taken up and completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) The minimum return criteria of 3% laid down by Power Finance Corporation has been relaxed for renovation and modernisation of Power Plants for extending financial assistance to the State Electricity Boards.

(b) An overall requirement of Rs. 2500—3000 crores has been projected during the 9th Five Year Plan to revamp/ retrofit and to achieve life extension of power plants more than 20 years old.

(c) and (d) Power Finance Corporation is not negotiating with foreign companies for bringing latest technology and man agement practices in the area of renovation & modernisation of the Power Stations. However, the Corporation is taking initiatives to short list vendors for renovation works.

Utilisation of Tapti Gas field for power projects in Gujarat

4385. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to get natural gas released from Tapti fields to Gujarat to enable it to establish gas based power project in the State to meet the demand of electricity; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in vita* of (a) above.

New Power Plants in 1997-98

4386. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of new power plants proposed to be set up during the current year i.e. 1997-98;

(b) what will be the total investment required therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to encourage the private sector in the power projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) The target for capacity addition for 1997-98 arc yet to be finalised. Plan outlay for Central Sector for 1997-98 is Rs. 6942.85 crores.

(c) In view of the paucity of resources in the public sector for capacity addition in power generation, a policy to encourage private participation was formulated